UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1965
25 August 1995

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council welcomes 17 August Tajik Protocol; calls on parties to implement commitments fully.

* Chairman of Special Commission says Iraq developed full-scale biological weapons programme; United States says conditions do not exist to lift sanctions.

* Secretary-General addresses National Assembly of Portugal; calls for greater promotion of development and democracy.

* Refugees return to camps in Zaire following suspension of expulsion policy.

* United States Ambassador outlines U.S. goals for Beijing Women's Conference; expresses concern at denial of visas and alleged detention of human rights activists.

* UNITAR announces distribution of geographic information system software to Viet Nam, Niger and Tanzania.

* * *

The Security Council today welcomed the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan, which was signed by the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the Tajik opposition on 17 August. In a statement by Council President Nugroho Wisnumurti (Indonesia), the Council called upon the parties to implement fully the commitments contained in the Protocol.

The Council supported the agreement of the parties to conduct the continual round of talks due to begin on 18 September 1995, with the aim of concluding a general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord in Tajikistan. It urged the parties to agree as soon as possible on the venue of the negotiations.

The Council welcomed the agreement reached by the parties to extend the existing cease-fire for six months until 26 February 1996, and called on the parties to comply strictly with this agreement. It called upon all States and

(more)

For information media—not an official record

others concerned to discourage any activities that could complicate or hinder the peace process, respecting fully the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tajikistan and the inviolability of the Tajik-Afghan border.

The Security Council urged the parties to implement as quickly as possible the confidence-building measures agreed upon during the fourth round of inter-Tajik talks held in Almaty. It stressed the need to continue the existing close contacts of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) with the parties as well as its close liaison with the CIS Collective Peace-Keeping Forces, with the Russian border forces and with the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan.

The Council welcomed the contributions by some Member States to the voluntary fund for the Tajikistan peace process, and encouraged other Member States to contribute.

* * *

The Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), Rolf Ekeus, today said new information obtained from Iraq revealed the development of a "full-scale" biological weapons programme, which matured in a very aggressive manner after the invasion of Kuwait. Speaking to the press after briefing the Security Council, Mr. Ekeus said Iraq now admitted to having gone far beyond what it had stated in its written declaration on biological weapons of 4 August.

Now Iraq had admitted to having produced ten times more anthrax than it had stated in the declaration. Furthermore, three different types of biological warfare agents, including one that had been kept secret until now, had been put into a total of 191 bombs and missiles. In all, he said, Iraq admitted to producing some 20,000 litres of biological agents. The process of filling weapons with the agents took place between 1 to 23 December 1990, just before the outbreak of the Gulf war. He said Iraq denied that it had used any biological weapons and UNSCOM had no reason to believe otherwise. Iraq has now declared that all agents were destroyed in July/August 1991, which would require verification by UNSCOM.

Mr. Ekeus also said Iraq admitted to the development of home-made missiles, which required vigorous investigation. He also said Iraq had supplied the International Atomic Energy Agency with information that it was working on a crash programme, immediately after the invasion of Kuwait, to produce a nuclear bomb from highly enriched uranium by April 1991.

Mr. Ekeus informed correspondents that the Iraqi Government had, at the last minute, provided him with some 150 boxes of documents on Iraq's nuclear, biological, chemical and missile programmes. UNSCOM was now working to verify that all information was correct, which would be a lengthy and difficult process.

(more)

Meanwhile, United States Ambassador Madeleine Albright has referred to Ambassador Ekeus' briefing to the Security Council as "chilling". Speaking to correspondents today outside the Council chamber, she said the U.S. position, which was shared by most Council members, was that sanctions would not be lifted until Iraq had complied with all of its obligations under Council resolutions.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has stressed the importance of development and democracy in a speech today to the Portuguese National Assembly, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. He said it was unconscionable and unacceptable at the end of the twentieth century, that 1.3 billion people were living in absolute poverty and that basic health care was not available to over 1.5 billion people worldwide. He called for greater efforts in support of development, especially in Africa. The women and men of Africa expected the hand of friendship, he said, and we must not fail them.

On the issue of democracy, he stressed that democratic values can and should be assimilated by all cultures. Although the United Nations was engaged in "democratization diplomacy" by providing electoral assistance, it should go further. The United Nations should also provide Member States with technical assistance which would allow them to adapt their institutions, to educate their citizens and train managers, to establish independent judiciaries, and to form armies which would respect the rule of law and police forces which would uphold civil liberties.

The Secretary-General also thanked Portugal for the role it played in the negotiations in Angola, and its recent substantial increase in peace-keeping contributions.

Saturday, the Secretary-General will meet with Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia. He will then depart Lisbon for New York.

* * *

A large number of the 173,000 refugees who fled camps in Zaire to avoid forced repatriation to Rwanda are reported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to be returning to camps in Zaire today, following yesterday's announcement by Zaire of suspension of its expulsion policy. According to a United Nations spokesman, up to 50 percent of the inhabitants of some camps had already returned by midday Friday.

Food distribution and other international assistance had resumed. UNHCR was combing the surrounding hills of the various camps to inform people that it was safe to return. The beginning of a voluntary repatriation, under

UNHCR, was getting underway. On Friday a small convoy went to Rwanda with fewer than 100 people.

* * *

The United States delegation will go to the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women to promote equal opportunity between men and women and to stress that violence against women is a crime. Speaking as the head of the U.S. delegation, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright today told correspondents that the release of American human rights activist Harry Wu had removed an obstacle to U.S.-China relations and improved the climate for U.S. participation in the Conference. She said it had not yet been decided whether First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton would attend the Conference.

Outlining U.S. goals for the Conference, Ambassador Albright said the United States wanted to promote and protect the human rights of women, end violence against women, expand women's participation in political and economic decision-making, ensure equal access for women to education and healthcare, and strengthen families through efforts to balance the work and family responsibilities of women and men. The Clinton Adminstration would use the Conference "to underline the truth that violence against women is not cultural; it is criminal and we all have a responsibility to stop it".

The U.S. Ambassador expressed concern at logistical difficulties which had not been resolved and might prevent people from attending the Conference. She had raised the issue with the Secretary-General and the Chinese. She would meet again today with the Chinese Ambassador to discuss the several hundred American NGO participants who were still awaiting their visas. The U.S. view was that "we understand the complexity of hosting such a Conference, but we could not excuse a deliberate effort to deny visas to participants who are peaceful but who happen to embrace policies the Chinese Government does not". Mrs. Albright also expressed concern at reports that China had detained human rights activists in advance of the Conference.

* * *

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has received a contribution of geographic information system software, valued in excess of $200,000, from the Environmental Systems Research Institute of Redlands, California. Copies of the software will be distributed to participants in UNITAR's national information systems training workshops this year in Viet Nam, Niger and Tanzania.

The donation was made under the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed in July between the California Institute and UNITAR. The agreement also provides for the Institute's sharing of expertise in geographic information system training and research to support UNITAR's training activities.

* *** *